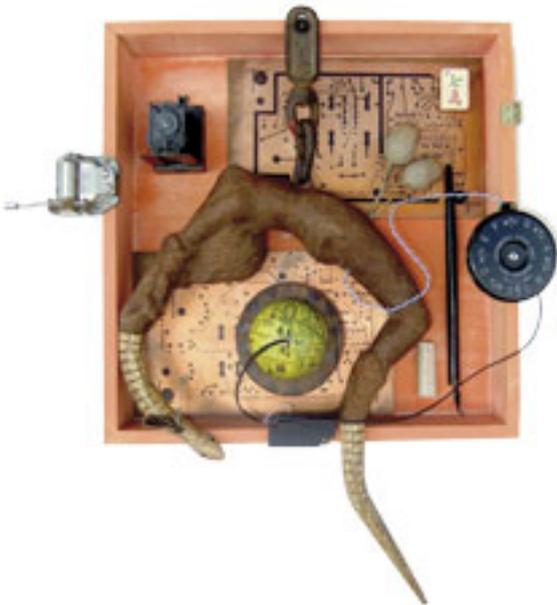


Focus on Art

By Rob Mohr



The Dance of the Snake Woman: Judy Dykstra Brown, Artist and Poet

Judy Dykstra Brown's voice as poet and visual artist has the power to transport the reader into a time, place and mood that she creates and controls. The encounter is vital and poignant. The reader knows the actors, tastes and smells the setting.

"In a brief period of time, both my father and my boy friend died. I was depressed and dreamed a man in a bar had thrown water in my face, but I had thrown the water. I woke up and began to create life."

Judy's visual works reveal pain and joy in metaphoric/symbolic stories from her life. Boxes or

frames contain found and crafted objects which, when combined, create new worlds meant to be understood as visual poetry (Chamula). Unlike the works of **Joseph Cornell** (1903-1972) whose boxes are formal arrangements of photographs and antique objects arranged to create a surreal world, Judy's boxes pull the viewer into vital perceptions of the world she has observed, experienced and loved. www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/cornell/

Her self-portrait breaks the bounds of the frame to psychologically engage viewer and surrounding environment to evoke passages from Judy's life. She reflected:

"The carved woman was done by my husband for an unfinished work. I added the snake to signify fluid movement through life, and to be an agent that brings messages from the dead ."

Judy's collaborator/housekeeper saw her self-portrait in progress and added feathers creating a plumed-serpent - Quetzalcoatl, the mythological, pre-Columbian man/god. Rich with symbolism - the music box plays an evening serenade of new love; the pens and brushes evoke writing and art; the pitch pipe, perfect harmony; the wires connected to the circuitry are connection with her beloved via internet as well as humanity's universal web of life, and the camera is the artist eye looking outward.

Her story boxes and poems share a common theme. Look at the snake woman while you consider these lines from Hair:

she draws his dreams

through its long shafts ...

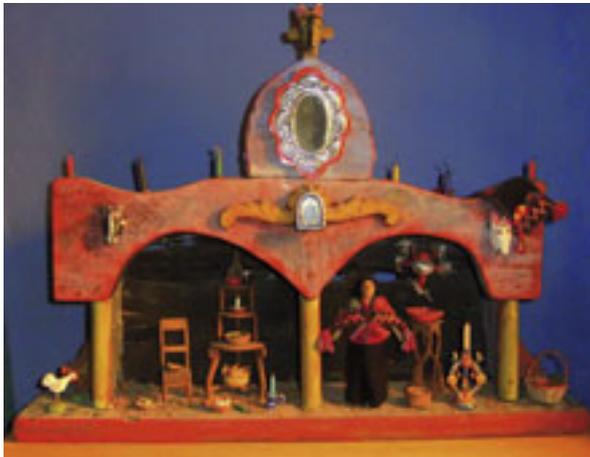
... her hair

his mouth

the cave

a feast of hair.

Her hair side-winding on the ground.



Judy observed: *“Art is about process, not product. You start before you know what you are doing and through the process teach yourself. The artist learns when they probe deep enough to awake the subconscious. A key for me is to not let the editing begin too soon. When you keep writing and go beyond the point when you think you have it, you step down into a deep place where writing comes alive and comes from a purer part of oneself.”* Judy grew up in a town of 750 people, knowing she was different and had to escape. Her parents later related they had understood that if she had stayed in their small town, she would not have adjusted to the world outside.

“When I got to California, it was like I had come home. Over time I got to know and appreciate poets and artists such as Carolyn Forché (b. 1950) - Lannan Chair in Poetry at Georgetown University; Sandra McPherson (1943-) professor Emeritus at the University of California; Carolyn Ashley Kizer (1925 -) Pulitzer Prize winner; and, best, my husband, a painter and professor of fine arts.

<http://www.poets.org/> (plus poet's name.)

Judy's intelligence, compassionate sensitivity and clear voice were born and nurtured in the process of life and discovery. Her new art works will be exhibited at Sol Mexican-Galeria del Arte,#13 Colon, Ajijic, beginning November 15 - opening reception from 4-6.